

Study UK: Research with prospective international students

2023-24

India insight
report



Purpose of this report

This brief report offers additional insights from Study UK's research with prospective international students, with a particular focus on India.

The report answers the following questions:

- How has consideration of the UK among prospective students in India changed over time?
- What other destinations do they typically consider?
- What are the most important destination perceptions when deciding on a country of study?
- How do they rate the UK and the UK's competitor destinations, on these perceptions? How has this changed year-on-year?

You can find a similar report, focusing on China [on our website](#), along with the full report of Study UK's 2023-24 research with prospective international students.

Study UK's 2024-25 research will be going into field in February 2025, with results available in April/May 2025.



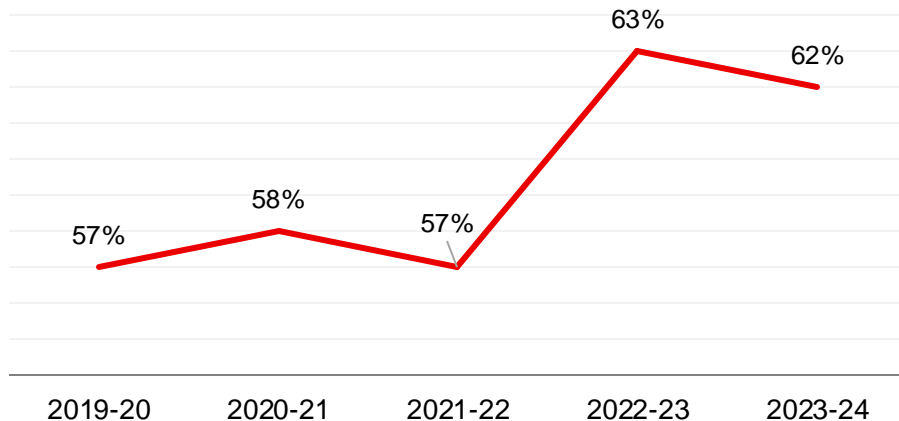
Sample and methodology

- Prospective international students aged 16-24 (50 per cent of sample) or 25-34 (50 per cent of sample), or parents of prospective international students of these ages took part in a 25-minute online survey in between January and February, 2024.
- All respondents were residents of one of the countries below. The country samples are weighted evenly to create International totals, and all represent the mix of 40 per cent undergraduate and 60 per cent postgraduate students.

	Total sample	China 	India 	Indonesia 	Malaysia 	Nigeria 	Pakistan 	USA 
Students	1,700	300	300	300	300	100	100	300
Parents	630	100	100	100	100	70	60	100
Total	2,330	400	400	400	400	170	160	400

Consideration of the UK as a destination for Indian prospective international students remained stable until 2022-23, when it experienced an increase, likely due to the introduction of the Graduate Route visa in 2021. Over the past five years, the USA has consistently been the most considered option for Indian students, with the UK maintaining its position as the second most popular option.

Percentage of Indian respondents considering the UK



Top three study destinations considered by Indian prospective students

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
USA	USA	USA	USA	USA
UK	UK	UK	UK	UK
Australia	Australia	Canada	Canada	Australia

Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of various perceptions of study abroad destinations in their decision-making process. For Indian students, the cost of studying and the availability of post-study work opportunities are more influential factors in their choice of destination compared to the overall sample.

Rational perceptions	Most important – India	Equivalent ranking – All sample
Has high quality colleges/universities and academic research	#1	#1
The cost of studying	#2	#6
Offers opportunities to work in the country after studying	#3	#10
Value for money	#4	#2
Future employability globally after studying	#5	#4
Offers the specific course that I'm interested in	#6	#3
The cost of accommodation and daily living	#7	#7
The availability of accommodation	#8	#9
Has an innovative and creative education system	#9	#5
It is fairly easy to get a visa	#10	#11

When asked about the key emotional perceptions influencing their decision-making, Indian prospective students are closely aligned with their counterparts from other countries. The most significant factors impacting their choice of destination include a welcoming environment, attractive lifestyle and culture and the chance to explore nature and the outdoors.

Emotional perceptions	Most important – India	Equivalent ranking – All sample
The country offers a welcoming environment	#1	#1
The country has an attractive life and culture	#2	#2
The country offers the opportunity to explore nature and the outdoors	#3	#3
It is easy to travel to and explore countries nearby	#4	#4
I have been inspired by alumni of that country	#5	#5
I know people who have studied there in the past	#6	#6
I have friends/family currently studying there	#7	#8
I have friends/family living there	#8	#7
I attended an overseas school of that country	#9	#8
I work / have previously worked for an organisation from that country	#10	#9

Respondents were then asked to rate the UK alongside a competitor set of 14 other destinations based on these same perceptions. While perception scores for the UK fell nearly across the board this year, the UK was placed ahead of competitors on some key perceptions, particularly value for money and post-study work opportunities.

Rational perceptions	% rating UK 'good' or 'excellent' (year-on-year change)	UK ranking in competitor set* (year-on-year change)
Has high quality universities and academic research	81% (-4pp)	#1 (no change)
Offers opportunities to work in the country after studying	76% (-1pp)	#4 (+4 places)
Value for money	75% (+6pp)	#3 (+6 places)
Offers a fun and engaging life on campus	74% (-2pp)	#4 (+3 places)
Offers the specific course that I'm interested in	74% (-5pp)	#5 (-1 place)
Reasonable academic/language requirements	74% (-3pp)	#6 (-1 place)
Innovative and creative education system	74% (-9pp)	#7 (-5 places)
Future employability globally after studying	73% (-7pp)	#8 (-5 places)
Offers flexible learning options	71% (-6pp)	#9 (-1 place)
Good range of suitable accommodation	70% (n/a)	#10 (n/a)

P25. How would you rate the following countries for each of these when it comes to deciding to study there? Please click on the scale(s) below to indicate your answer, where 1 = very poor and 5 = excellent. Base: India n=400. Base: all sample n=2,327

* Competitor set: Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA

In terms of emotional perceptions, the UK generally underperforms, showing declines across all categories and exhibiting few positive changes in its ranking compared to the 14 competitors year-on-year.

Emotional perceptions	% rating UK 'good' or 'excellent' (year-on-year change)	UK ranking in competitor set* (year-on-year change)
The country offers the opportunity to explore nature and the outdoors	76% (-5%)	#1 (no change)
The country offers a welcoming environment	70% (-8pp)	#4 (-1 place)
The country has an attractive life and culture	70% (-10pp)	#2 (no change)
It is easy to travel to and explore countries nearby	70% (-3pp)	#3 (+2 places)
I know people who have studied there in the past	65% (-9pp)	#5 (-1 place)
I have friends/family currently studying there	64% (-3pp)	#6 (no change)
I have been inspired by alumni of that country	61% (-1pp)	#7 (+1 place)
I have friends/family living there	57% (-12pp)	#8 (-1 place)
I work/have previously worked for an organisation from that country	45% (-5pp)	#12 (no change)
I have previously travelled there	43% (-9pp)	#13 (-4 places)

P25. How would you rate the following countries for each of these when it comes to deciding to study there? Please click on the scale(s) below to indicate your answer, where 1 = very poor and 5 = excellent. Base: India n=400. Base: all sample n=2,327

* Competitor set: Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA

Key points

- The UK continues to be the second most considered study abroad destination for Indian prospective students, following the USA.
- Encouragingly, the UK has overtaken competitors on some of the destination perceptions that Indian students say are more important to them this year, namely, value for money and post-study work opportunities.
- However, the UK is losing ground in other important areas. Compared to the USA and Australia, the UK trails in offering an innovative and creative education system and good future employability globally.



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